

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7352

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: FORMER CU MINISTER MITSOTAKIS URGES MODIFICATION TO  
ELECTORAL LAW

1. FORMER CU MINISTER CONSTANTINE MITSOTAKIS (MINISTER FINANCE, PAPANDREOU GOVERNMENT, 1963-65, MINISTER COORDINATION, STEFANOPOULOS GOVERNMENT, 1965-66), ISSUED STATEMENT OCTOBER 7 URGING GOVERNMENT TO MAKE CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS IN ITS RECENTLY PROMULGATED ELECTORAL LAW. MITSOTAKIS ARGUED THAT SUCH CHANGES WOULD ALLOW GREATER NUMBER OF POLITICAL PERSONALITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS, ENCOURAGE NEW POLITICAL FORCES TO COMPETE FOR DEPUTY SEATS, AND WOULD REDUCE NUMBER OF SEATS TO BE ALLOCATED BY "SECOND DISTRIBUTION." (SEE ATHENS 6902 FOR EXPLANATION OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM).

2. MITSOTAKIS SUGGESTED THREE SPECIFIC CHANGES:

(A) PERMIT VOTERS TO EXPRESS MANY PREFERENCES ON THE SELECTED PARTY BALLOT, RATHER THAN SINGLE PREFERENCE OR IN CASE OF ATHENS AND THESSALONIKI, TWO PREFERENCES; (MITSOTAKIS CLAIMED GREATER OPPORTUNITY WOULD THUS BE AFFORDED NEW BLOOD TO EMERGE AND PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT); (B) DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF PARTY CANDIDATES ELIGIBLE IN A GIVEN DISTRICT ON GROUND THAT SINCE NEW POLITICAL FORCES HAVE BEEN GENERATED DURING THE "IDLE  
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SEVEN YEAR PERIOD", THIS FACTOR SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED BY AT LEAST

PERMITTING PLACING ADDITIONAL NAMES ON BALLOTS; (C) MODIFY THE SYSTEM OF ARRIVING AT THE "ELECTORAL STANDARD" IN EACH DISTRICT, SO THAT FEWER SEATS WILL BE LEFT OVER FOR ALLOCATION IN THE "SECOND DISTRIBUTION". WHILE MITSOTAKIS' SUGGESTION IS COUCHED IN TECHNICAL TERMS, HIS AIM IS TO LET THE POPULAR VOTE OF EACH DISTRICT DETERMINE IN FIRST ROUND (TO GREATEST DEGREE POSSIBLE) THOSE WHO WILL OCCUPY ITS DEPUTY SEATS IN PARLIAMENT. MITSOTAKIS POINTED OUT IN STATEMENT THAT UNDER CURRENT SYSTEM, "WHICH ALSO OBTAINED IN 1958", THE LEFTIST EDA PARTY WAS ABLE TO BECOME THE SECOND PARTY OF GREECE SINCE IT MANAGED TO SECURE SO MANY SEATS IN THE SECOND DISTRIBUTION.

3. COMMENT: ROLE WHICH MITSOTAKIS WILL PLAY IN NOVEMBER 17 ELECTIONS STILL OBSCURE. WHILE IT IS CERTAIN THAT CU/NEW FORCES GROUPING WILL NOT PERMIT HIM (AS APOSTATE) TO RUN AS CANDIDATE UNDER ITS BANNER, IT IS ALSO UNLIKELY THAT HE COULD JOIN FORCES PAPANDREOU'S PASOK. WHILE CARAMANLIS' REPORTED ORIGINAL INCLINATION WAS TO INCLUDE MITSOTAKIS UNDER NEA DEMOKARTIS BANNER, HE APPARENTLY FOUND TOO STRONG RESISTANCE ON THE PART OF ORTHODOX ERE MEMBERS TO DO SO. THIS LEAVES AS ONLY APPARENT OPTIONS FOR MITSOTAKIS INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY OR AFFILIATION WITH GAROUFALIAS' NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC UNION, NEITHER OF WHICH IN EMBASSY VIEW WOULD ADVANCE HIS POLITICAL PROSPECTS OR ACCORD WITH HIS OWN POLITICAL CONVICTIONS.

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